



March 5, 2007

H.R. 276 - Piedras Blancas Historic Light Station Outstanding Natural Area Act of 2007

Floor Situation

H.R. 276 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Lois Capps (D-CA) on January 5, 2007, and has not been considered by any committee in the 110th Congress.

H.R. 276 is expected to be considered on the floor on March 5, 2007.

**Note: In the 109th Congress, similar legislation, The Piedras Blancas Historic Light Station Outstanding Natural Area Act of 2005, (H.R. 3534), passed in the House of Representatives by voice vote on September 25, 2006.*

Summary

H.R. 276 will designate the Piedras Blancas Light Station and the approximately 18 acres of public land that surround the light station as an Outstanding Natural Area to be administered as part of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This designation would permit certain recreational and research activities to continue and would prohibit the possibility of future sale or partition of the land under federal mining laws.

**Note: These lands are currently managed by the BLM but are not a part of the NLCS.*

Additionally, H.R. 276 requires the Secretary of the Interior to complete a comprehensive management plan in consultation with federal, state, and local agencies with full public participation no later than 3 years after the date of enactment.

Background

History: Piedras Blancas is located on California's central coast, halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. The point is named for a white rock outcropping located just off the end of the point. In the early 1870's, this location was chosen to fill the gap between the lighthouses at Point Conception and Point Sur.

The Piedras Blancas Lighthouse was completed in 1875. A two story Victorian style

dwelling was completed later that year. A fog signal building and additional keeper's dwelling were added in 1906.

Piedras Blancas lighthouse was operated by employees of the US Lighthouse Service until 1939 when the Coast Guard assumed command. Structural damage to the tower and new technology eventually replaced many of the functions of the light keepers as they became automated. The Coast Guard subsequently relinquished control and management of the Piedras Blancas Light Station to the BLM on October 12, 2001.

Land Management: The BLM has assumed administrative control and is in the process of initiating restoration and stabilization efforts.

The BLM currently manages approximately 264 million acres of publicly owned lands in the U.S. In June 2000, the BLM created the NLCS, which currently consists of over 800 units.

The BLM's management of all public lands, including those in the NLCS, is guided by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1737 (b)), which provided for multiple uses of the public lands.

Cost

H.R. 276 has not been scored by the Congressional Budget Office.

**Note: Similar legislation introduced in the 109th Congress, (H.R. 3534), was estimated by CBO to have no significant impact on the federal revenues, direct spending, or offsetting receipts.*

Staff Contact

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